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WHAT WE EMPHASIZE IN 4-H CLUB WORK

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★ MAY 2 1934 ★

U. S. Department of Agriculture

A radio talk by T. M. Campbell, Field Agent in Negro Work, Tuskegee, Alabama, delivered in the National 4-H club radio program, May 5, 1934, and broadcast by a network of 58 associate NBC stations.

One of the strongest virtues of Negro Extension Work is the maintenance of a force of efficiently trained men and women agents. Their background and experience in farm and home life give them a sympathetic and appreciative understanding of the needs and interests of the rural youth. They are conscious of the fact that these negro boys and girls are deprived (through no fault of their own) of many of the fundamentals necessary in the development of useful citizens. Therefore at the present time in 4-H club work, major emphasis is laid on a program for these young people that embodies four things; recreation, health improvement, increased income and education.

There is now, and always has been a woeful lack of social and recreational facilities for negro children in the rural districts. Aside from monthly church meetings, occasional trips to town, poorly equipped baseball teams and a few scattered singing clubs, there is little else for them to do, except eat, sleep and work. These boys and girls rarely ever have any money to spend for the things that all normal children want, because of the low economic status of the average negro farm family. Therefore, extension agents work hard to provide the club members with varied and healthful recreational activities such as participation in 4-H club camps, picnics, folk-plays, community sings and achievement days, thus giving them the benefits of well directed and healthy play.

The improvement of the health of rural youth is also greatly needed, and the extension agents take advantage of every available agency to bring about better health among 4-H club members. They seek through them, to reach their parents, and thus instill better health habits in the whole family. Throughout the year, clean-up campaigns are conducted, health tours made and clinics held in cooperation with rural schools, churches and state and county health units. At the clinics, boys and girls get the benefit of a thorough physical examination and their parents are advised to have corrected such defects, as are found.

Aside from disseminating useful information on health, sanitation and personal hygiene, special health education programs are conducted. Particular emphasis is placed on the proper relationships in the home, such as separate sleeping quarters, and adequate bathing facilities, in order to create in these young people a greater amount of pride in themselves and a deeper respect for others.

In a wider application of this program, 4-H club members are also encouraged to improve their homes and local surroundings.

With respect to increasing the farm income, productive projects, such as will yield ready cash, have received major consideration in 4-H club work. Under careful guidance of county agents, 4-H club boys carry projects in cotton,

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corn, pigs and feed crops. Under the home demonstration agents, 4-H club girls carry projects in gardening, foods, clothing and poultry raising. In this manner club members are taught that, other things being equal, the farm should yield as independent an income as any other vocation.

Finally, the extension agents are ever mindful of the urgent need for rural leaders on the farm, in the home, church and school. Since educational facilities of the average rural community are absolutely inadequate for the training of efficient leaders, club members are encouraged to seek further educational advantages offered in the various land grant colleges, so that when they return to their communities, they can assume positions of leadership. To accomplish this, these agents do all they can to aid 4-H club members in securing sufficient funds to complete their education.

We are thoroughly convinced that the future progress of rural negroes depends largely upon the amount of agricultural and home economic information the Extension Service is able to give the young people in every county and every community in the South.

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